

BACK TO THE SOIL AND BACK TO HOME

The Go West Theory Has Been
Exploded All Around and
Everywhere.

RENAISSANCE IN AGRICULTURE

Recognized Authority Describes
Movement for Development
of Soil Resources.

In a general discussion of the important relations of agriculture to the nation's welfare, Howard H. Gross, president of the National Soil Fertility League, has submitted a proposition, supported by a number of the representative men of the country, that appeals to widespread interest. A recent review of the situation and possibilities by Mr. Gross describes confidently the bringing forth of the comparison between European and American methods and natural resources. "Fifty years ago," says Mr. Gross, "with tens of millions of acres of fertile land unoccupied, the need was for people to come in and possess it. Population was needed, or at least that was the supposition. The invitation was the supposition. The invitation was that 'Uncle Sam was rich enough to give us all a farm.' The people came in from abroad, first in hundreds, later by thousands and in recent years by millions of thousands. The result was that the soil has been changed into conditions that the land is now practically all taken and in use. The government spent its time for years in giving away land and building up manufacturing industries, and helping the farmers. Farming has always been and always will be the world's greatest industry. It is so with us, but American farming was left practically to care for itself. There was plenty of land, and if (as was inevitable under the practice that obtained of farming by the 'skinning process'), certain lands were to be lost, the power to produce satisfactory crops, why the remedy was to sell them for what they were worth, or abandon them and go farther West and get a better farm for little or nothing. The practice in two or three generations exhausted immense acres right at the very door of the markets.

Change of the Order.
The 'trend' was to the westward, the slogan of the great Greeley was 'Go West, young man, and grow up with the country.' To-day we may fairly say to the man in the West, 'Go East, young man, and buy these abandoned farms and bring them back to fertility and usefulness.' The land in the West is practically all occupied. We must face about and stop depleting the soil and robbing the future of its heritage, and build up the damage that has already been done. While the great Mississippi Basin will always hold first place in agriculture, it is the writer's opinion, all things considered, that the opportunities in the East and Southeast are, from a financial standpoint, more attractive to the young and the ambitious farmer. The worn, depleted farms that lie close to the markets can be had for less money than the cost of the improvement and in them are golden opportunities for young or middle-aged men with brains and industry. By improved tillage, better seed, crop rotation and fertilization, in a few years these farms will respond with substantial yields and may be made to grow better from year to year. It takes no prophet to see in these lands at \$15 to \$30 an acre an increase of 300 per cent. to 500 per cent. within ten or a dozen years.

The two contributing causes for this advance are the scientific agriculture and good roads.

"We, of course, are proud of our wonderful achievements in the realm of transportation, manufacturing and education, but in doing so, let us not forget that under and sustaining all is the soil—the soil—the soil—and we have to have it and must come almost wholly from it.

The world's greatest need, the most pressing and the paramount economic problem, is soil restoration and the building up of a system of farming that shall be permanent and profitable. This can be done. There is no doubt about it. It must be done if the coming generations are to have a proper food supply at a reasonable cost. Without this the future holds distress and disintegration instead of prosperity and progress.

Figures That Talk.
Some figures taken from official sources will be interesting in this connection. The average wheat yield for the United States for ten years is a little over fourteen bushels per acre, while in Europe, upon lands that were in cultivation many centuries before our soil was turned, the wheat averages are twenty-eight bushels in Germany; thirty-two, in England; forty, in Denmark. It is not uncommon to have yields of sixty bushels or more in France, Italy, etc.

Simply because of better preparation of the seed bed, more perfect drainage, more careful seed selection, deep tilling and fertilization.

About twenty-five years ago Germany began a system to further build up agriculture, and since that time she has raised the average yield on the six principal crops of about 50 per cent. It is now fully twice our average.

The United States Experiment Station at Wooster, Ohio, cultivated wheat systematically for thirteen years—many varieties. The lowest yield was twenty-six bushels per acre, and the highest over forty-five, with an average of about thirty-five bushels. The corn average for the whole country was about twenty-five and one-half bushels per acre, while the Experiment stations are getting about 100 bushels.

James J. Hill, of St. Paul, and William C. Brown, of New York, both authorities of the first rank, say that with proper preparation of the seed bed, using the best seed and more intelligent cultivation, the farm yield can be doubled, and all this with very little extra work or expense.

"A doubling of the yield will more than double the profits even if prices should somewhat sag. With a hungry world abroad and an enormously growing population at home, there is no danger whatever of overproduction.

The Better Products.
In passing, permit the writer to say that the best products of our country are not the wheat, corn or oats, or hogs and cattle, but rather the boys and girls in the farm home. To make them happy, contented and eager to take up agriculture as a life business is a question of tremendous importance.

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SOME TALK ABOUT LEAF TOBACCO

(Continued From First Page.)

ance. The larger profits, possible by the newer methods, the opportunities for mixing brain and brawn with such splendid results, together with good country highways, the consolidated township school, which will enable these boys and girls to get the equivalent of a high school education and remain on the farm, are tremendously important, and these conditions must be established if we expect the boys and girls to remain. The need of the hour is for an intelligent, nation-wide, well planned and sustained effort for a better agriculture.

"This means an organization of strong, well equipped men, who will make it their business to take up and follow this great work and seek to enlist and correlate all forces available, and centralize the movement for a definite end. The National Soil Fertility League has assumed to do this. It has nothing to sell, no axes to grind and no private interests to protect. It has a strong directorate upon which are two eminent and successful farmers, a railway president and two large manufacturers. On the advisory committee are such distinguished men as President of the United States, J. J. Hill, R. F. Taft, J. M. Studebaker, A. H. Chandler, Samuel W. Allerton, Champ Clarke, Franklin MacVeigh and others.

"These men are not dreamers. In a word, the plan of the League is to arouse interest in agriculture, and to secure Federal and State legislation, carrying appropriations for the express purpose of enabling the State colleges of agriculture to send out ultimately into every one of the 3,000 counties a trained farm demonstrator to co-operate with farmers and help them to understand and apply in practice upon the respective farms the methods best suited to them. They will study local conditions and ascertain what ought to be done before beginning to do it.

"This plan has been tried to a considerable extent in various locations, and it has always resulted in practically doubling the yield. The league proposes a nation-wide movement that shall place the new methods at the very door of every farmer. The total expense of maintaining this campaign, when it is fully inaugurated, should not be more than \$100,000 per year. If it shall be only one-half as much, it will be a very small price to place human effort and money where it will do so much and such lasting good. If the country is to endure, the problem of food supply must be solved, and it is time we were about it."

GOOD ROADS DOWN IN OLD VIRGINIA

Mecklenburg County Making a
Reputation Away From Home.
Others May Do Likewise.

"Virginia," says the Manufacturers Record, "is one of the Southern States in which the enthusiasm for improved highways is taking the practical direction of large bond issues for their construction."

"Among the latest of these are \$240,000 worth which the Board of Supervisors of Mecklenburg county ordered last week to be issued; \$25,000 for Palmer's Spring district, \$40,000 for the Buckhorn district, \$10,000 for South Hill, \$50,000 for La Croix and \$75,000 for Boydton. These issues, added to previous ones, make a total bond issue of \$350,000 for good roads in that county. The South Hill Enterprise, referring to the 5 per cent. interest to be paid, suggests that these bonds will be a good investment for the individuals in the county or elsewhere, but the money derived from the sale of the bonds, when spent in providing the country with first-class highways, will turn out to be a far better investment for the county as a whole and for its individual citizens."

Wherever good roads have been provided the market value of farm lands has advanced, for the simple reason that accessibility is one of the determining factors in the price of land everywhere, just as the price received for crops from the land is an important factor. Good roads, of course, do not increase the fertility of the soil, but they enable the farmer to get his products to market more easily and more cheaply, and consequently, by reducing the cost of marketing them, give him greater net returns. Besides, improved roads are followed by improved neighborhoods, schools and church facilities, and add to life in the country elements which cannot be represented by dollars and cents, but which are worth more than many things which money can buy.

A NEW COAL ROAD.

Boston Money Finds Investment in Coal Lands in West Virginia. The Report & Northeastern Railroad Company, which has just been chartered in West Virginia, will build a line of thirty miles long, which will connect Expert, in Greenbrier county, with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at or near Fenwick, W. Va., in Nicholas county, about eighteen miles south of Camden-on-Gauley. The route lies through rough country, and will follow the courses of Big Clear and Big Laurel creeks. It will have to cross the highlands between the headwaters of these streams, and will doubtless require some heavy construction. Boston, Mass., capitalists seem to be the principal people interested in this new development, as the incorporators are all of that city, to-wit: H. L. Higginson, Joseph F. Hill, C. A. Ellis, H. L. Shattuck and Seth C. Gano.

VEWS AND NEAR VIEWS

(Continued From First Page.)

be heard if they have brief hints and suggestions to offer. As announced in another place the industrial editor proposes to open this column to writers who have hints and suggestions to make, if they can put these hints and suggestions into short compass. I am not opening this column for discussion, political or otherwise, or for long-winded essays on any subject, but I do want to keep it free of the kind of good year 1912 with live hints and suggestions from people who have Virginia development at heart and who can say something worth saying in a short space. And so it is hereby announced that "hints and suggestions" that can be held down to 150 to 200 words, are invited from all parts of the State. I want the people to make this column their own instead of mine. Of course, I reserve the privilege of contributing to it.

Let Well Enough Alone.

Professor Masser has in the Progressive Farmer an editorial page all his own, and every week in the year, except the holiday week, he puts something in that page that is worth remembering. He thinks the farmers of this great Southland country are the greatest folks in the world. Nevertheless he is of the opinion that some of them sometimes get a little too inquisitive and seek after too much information about crops they know not of and that are best suited to the lands of other parts of the country. The professor but expresses my own views when he declares that some of the money-making crops in the world, aside from the cotton and tobacco propositions, and everybody acknowledges that we are "in the matter of those crops, Professor Masser proceeds to show that we can beat the West in corn if we farm right. We can beat the whole country in oats sowed in the fall, and we can grow more stock feed of high quality with cowpeas and soy beans and velvet beans than any other part of the country, and we do not need to monkey with broomcorn or sunflowers.

We can raise hogs cheaper than they can in the West because of the abundance of food we grow for them to eat and harvest for themselves, and we can feed beef and dairy cattle more cheaply than the North or West. All of these things have been abundantly proven here in Virginia, especially those facts about beef and dairy cattle, and about corn and hogs.

Brilliant Outlook.

The iron and steel trade is said to be the barometer that points to and indicates all classes of business and the conditions prevailing in that line are but reflections of what may be looked for in all other lines. If this is true, the outlook for the new year is bright, for the quarter and first half has not experienced the usual holiday lull, and December has proven to be the heaviest month of the year in bookings.

"Inasmuch as steel mills are more likely to close at this season of the year for repairs than to open after an idleness there are few reasonings at this time, and production is not materially increased, but orders which were issued a fortnight ago for the banking of several furnaces over the holidays have been rescinded, and production will be maintained. Extension plans have been approved for resumption at the beginning of January, and from running at 75 per cent. of capacity during the past three months the steel industry promises to be running at 80 to 85 per cent. in the first half of January, while a rate of 90 per cent. may be reached by the close of the month."

As to Savings Banks.

I clip the following from a financial journal:
"It is stated at the Post-Office Department that the \$500 limit of postal savings bank deposits will be removed in the near future. Many depositors have reached the limit in their deposits, and the trustees of the bank have moved to permit deposits without limitation as to the amount. The Postmaster-General has received petitions from several national banks to the same effect. I may be a little obtuse, but for the life of me I have never yet been able to figure out wherein the postal savings bank proposition is in any way an improvement on the savings banks as we have them down here in Virginia, especially in Richmond. It would take too much space to go into details, and it is none of my business anyhow, but all the same Richmond has some savings banks that are in all respects just as good, and in some respects a sight better than anything the government has yet offered."

Right Here in Virginia.

Here is an interesting item I got from a financial journal:
"An order for 155 new steel passenger coaches placed last week with the American Car and Foundry Company, for the New York Central lines, has aroused more than ordinary interest because of the announcement that this is the third extensive order by that system given within sixty days for new equipment that altogether in-

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Facts—Figures—Verified.
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Virginia Trust Company

Richmond, Va.

This Company, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of Michael Murphy, deceased, all persons having claims against said estate are requested to present them at this office, and those indebted to the estate will please make payment.

Virginia Trust Company

Executor of Michael Murphy

involves an expenditure of over \$23,000,000."
And a large number of other roads are filling orders for steel cars and for various other equipment things. The railroads do not file orders in a dull time. The fact that they are filling all kinds of orders is right good evidence that we may look forward to greater and bigger business along all lines in the good year 1912. And Old Virginia is right in the centre of this good business.

According to reports 2,000,000 post cards went through the mails swapping Christmas greetings, and the net revenue to the government on the same was \$20,000. Good enough. It helped the government and the post card system was much cheaper to the Christmas greeters than the old way of sending turkeys and potatoes and all the like of that, which was more costly than 1 cent and embarrassing in more ways than one.

It is said that Santa Claus brought only three automobiles to Richmond. The 597 other folks who looked for autos may well congratulate themselves that they have saved the expense of the up-keep of the plagued thing.

Well, as to the coal mines up in Chesterfield, near Middlethorpe, for instance, The Industrial Section awaits reports. What about it, Brother Jones?

Scottsville is a mighty good town, but it has in it some mighty modest people who seem to hate to talk. There are several men there who are capable of letting the world know where Scottsville is on the map. If they want to they can talk out in the Industrial Section of The Times-Dispatch.

And the same is applicable to several other good towns in Virginia and over in North Carolina.
The X-ray reveals Quality, Purity, Spirituality. The Velvet Kind Ice Cream.

Exit 1911!--Enter 1912!

Looking backward for just a moment, young man! If that good resolution made January 1, 1911, had been adhered to, what would you have had in the COMMONWEALTH BANK to-day—two hundred—five hundred—a thousand dollars?

"Might have been" don't amount to much, though, except as stimulants to do better in the future.

Make up your mind to-day that December 31, 1912, will see a comfortable balance to your credit in our savings department.

Just a word now to folks who are getting dividend money these days—put it in our savings department and have the pleasure of seeing it earn more money for you.

Your need for it may be greater a few years from now than at the present time.

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